

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A set of nucleic acids comprising:
a first nucleic acid ~~containing~~ SEQ ID NO:1 or 3, and
a second nucleic acid ~~containing~~ SEQ ID NO:2 or 4;
~~wherein the first and second nucleic acids are no shorter than 18 nucleotides and no longer than 40 nucleotides in length and, participate in a polymerase chain reaction, with an Escherichia coli nucleic acid as a template, to generate a nucleic acid that specifically hybridizes under highly stringent conditions to SEQ ID NO: 5, 6, 7, or 8, or the complement thereof.~~
2. (Cancelled).
3. (Cancelled).
4. (Currently amended) The set of nucleic acids of claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein the first nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:1 and the second nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:2.
5. (Cancelled).
6. (Cancelled).
7. (Currently amended) The set of nucleic acids of claim ~~[[6]]~~ 1, wherein the first nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:3 and the second nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:4.
- 8-14. (Cancelled).

15. (Previously presented) A nucleic acid selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:5-8 and the complete complements thereto.

16-22. (Cancelled).

23. (Original) The nucleic acid of claim 15, wherein said nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:5.

24. (Original) The nucleic acid of claim 15, wherein said nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:6.

25. (Original) The nucleic acid of claim 15, wherein said nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:7.

26. (Original) The nucleic acid of claim 15, wherein said nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:8.

27. (Withdrawn) A method of detecting Escherichia coli, comprising:
providing a sample having a nucleic acid from an unknown microorganism;
amplifying the nucleic acid with an upstream primer containing SEQ ID NO:1 or 3 and a downstream primer containing SEQ ID NO:2 or 4, each primer being 18-40 nucleotides in length; and
detecting an amplification product;
whereby detection of the amplification product indicates the presence of Escherichia coli.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, wherein the upstream primer contains SEQ ID NO:1 and the downstream primer contains SEQ ID NO:2.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein each primer is 18-30 nucleotides in length.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 29, wherein the detecting step includes hybridizing the amplification product to a nucleic acid probe that is 26-1000 nucleotides in length and contains a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:5-8, or a sequence complementary thereto.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30, wherein said nucleic acid probe is 26-50 nucleotides in length.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, wherein the upstream primer contains SEQ ID NO:3 and the downstream primer contains SEQ ID NO:4.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein each primer is 24-32 nucleotides in length.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 33, wherein the detecting step includes hybridizing the amplification product to a nucleic acid probe that is 26-1000 nucleotides in length and contains a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:5-8, or a sequence complementary thereto.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34, wherein said nucleic acid probe is 26-50 nucleotides in length.

36. (Currently amended) The set of nucleic acid of claim 1, further comprising a third nucleic acid that is ~~no shorter than 26 nucleotides and no longer than 1000 nucleotides in length and contains a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs:5-8, and sequences complementary thereto, wherein the third nucleic acid specifically hybridizes under highly stringent conditions to SEQ ID NO: 5, 6, 7, or 8, or the complete complement thereof~~ selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 5-8 and the complete complements thereto.

37-39. (Cancelled).

40. (Currently amended) The set nucleic acid of claim [[39]] 36, wherein the third nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:5.

41. (Currently amended) The set nucleic acid of claim [[39]] 36, wherein the third nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:6.

42. (Currently amended) The set nucleic acid of claim [[39]] 36, wherein the third nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:7.

43. (Currently amended) The set nucleic acid of claim [[39]] 36, wherein the third nucleic acid is SEQ ID NO:8.